1: Fitzgerald H-5 (1937-1938) AE3 Sino-Tibetan
Border Peoples AE3

CHAPTER 2

THE RICE STANDARD

RICE IS THE real standard of wealth among the Min Chia. Direct barter of rice for commodities is common, rents are paid and calculated in rice, and rice producing land is the chief investment of the wealthy, and the principal source of revenue for the government. No other crop compares with rice either in actual value or in the estimation of the people. Land which is unsuitable for rice cultivation is hardly regarded as anything better than waste. In consequence of this preoccupation with the rice crop the Min Chia neglect the development of other forms of agriculture and have failed to exploit all the possibilities of land on which rice cannot be grown.

The Min Chia are rarely if ever found on land where rice cultivation is impossible, they avoid the mountains, and when the excess of population makes its impossible for all to engage in rice farming, they prefer to emigrate to distant parts of the Province rather than cultivate other crops upon the mountain sides. Whether this is to be explained as the failure of an immigrant people of lowland origin to adapt itself to the life of mountaineers, or as the whole-hearted conversion of a people, once pastoral hillmen, to the advantages of intensive agriculture, there is no direct evidence to show. The Min Chia lack any tradition of immigration to their present home, and it may be regarded as certain that they have practised their present mode of life for at least seven centuries.

Although there is thus an ancient tradition in support of rice farming, and an almost psychological aversion to living on the mountains, there are also strong economic arguments

1: Fitzgerald H-5 (1937-1938) AE3 Sino-Tibetan
Border Peoples AE3

ninepence, consequently the price of one *mu* expressed in sterling would be £7 10s. 0d. or £45 0s. 0d. per acre. This price means of course very much more in terms of the purchasing power of the Min Chia farmer. Before going further it may be as well as to say something about the currency used in western Yunnan and its equivalent values in sterling. In recent years the wide diversity of currencies in circulation in different parts of China have been abolished wherever the rule of the Central Government became effective, and a standard system of dollars and cents, the dollar being worth in normal times about 1s. 2d., has been introduced. This is called the National Currency. Unfortunately it has only just begun to reach Yunnan where the old chaos of varying currencies still exists, by no means simplified by the addition of yet another. There are in fact now five meanings to the word "dollar" in Yunnan : The National Dollar, the Yunnan Silver Dollar (supposed to be withdrawn from circulation but still in use in remote districts), the new Yunnan paper dollar, worth half a National Dollar ; the Old Yunnan paper dollar, worth only a tenth of the National Dollar ; and the Nickel dollar, of ten nickel cents, which only circulates in west Yunnan, has no actual existence (i.e. there is no such coin) and is worth about three pence. This last, the most local, is in fact the currency in which Ta Li prices are calculated, except for land, which is usually priced in Yunnan Silver dollars. It will be convenient therefore to express all prices in the nickel currency, but the following table of equivalents may be referred to.

YUNNAN CURRENCIES

Exchange rates of 1937

1 $ Nat. = 2 $ New Paper = 10 $ Old Paper	=	1s. 2d. sterling
1 $ Yunnan Silver = 3 $ Nickel	=	0s. 9d. ,,
1 $ Nickel = 10 nickel cents	=	3d. ,,

1: Fitzgerald II-5 (1937-1938) AE3 Sino-Tibetan
Border Peoples AE3

THE RICE STANDARD

Since the war with Japan began the National Currency has fallen in relation to sterling, but the internal purchasing power of the local currency has hardly altered at all. Therefore it is better to express the value of the local currency in sterling in accordance with the rate of exchange prevailing before the war, in the first half of 1937.

In calculating the value of the yield of any farm in the Ta Li region it must be remembered, that as rice cannot be exported in any quantity owing to the high cost and inadequate nature of the transport, when the crop is good the price is low, and when the price is high, it is because the yield is poor. The Min Chia farmer therefore never gets the maximum return from his land which is theoretically possible, and an estimate of the income derived from rice farming must take account of this. We may take the harvest of 1938 as an example. The year was good, the crop abundant ; consequently the price of rice was low, seven nickel cents to the *sheng*, or about 2½*d.* for nine lbs. The yield was high, twelve *tou* to the *mu*, therefore,

One *tou* of ten *sheng* gives 70 nickel cents = 7 $ Nickel
One *mu* yields 12 *tou* giving 84 $ Nickel
One acre or six *mu* gives 504 $ Nickel = £6 6*s.* 0*d.*

which is not a poor return on an investment of £45 0*s.* 0*d.* A further return of about one tenth the value of the rice crop is obtained from the wheat or other winter crops.

A family of moderate means, owning 18 *mu* or three acres, would therefore have harvested in 1938 crops to the value of about £20 0*s.* 0*d.* If the family consisted of some five or six persons, adults and children, £10 0*s.* 0*d.* worth would be consumed by themselves as food, leaving at most half the crop to sell or exchange for other commodities. The purchasing power of such a family would in other words be at most £10 0*s.* 0*d.* per annum. If however they had to rent half

4: Liu K-4 (no date) 1944 AE3 Sino-Tibetan
Border Peoples AE3

301 She[1] carries all her woredly possessions in the form of decorations in her hair, and around her eeck and wrists. That is the reason why paper money is of no use in this region.

436

291 In regard to shoes, the Ch'iang people are asually bare-footed, or wear straw sandals. The Gia-rung people wear cloth shoes of the Taing dynasty style, and the Fan people and the Black River people wear boots. This is due to the differences in the winter temperature.

262 There is no tribal difference in foodstuffs, but rather a difference in crops according to differences in the attitude. Both the Ch'iang and Gia-rung who live below an altitude of 8,000 ft. use corn as their staple food. For those who live above 8,000, their cheap food supply is Irish potatoes and barley and oats. For the Fan people in the grasslands, it is barley flour and butter and milk, and practically no green vegetables. The reason for the corn diet of people living below 8,000 ft. altitude is that mountain farms are generally small and their improved land is still more limited. The farmers are poor, and therefore they are under compulsion to raise the crop which will give them the most food, and not crops which are usually more nutritious. For people who live above 8,000 ft., the humidity is higher and the temperature lower; therefore, natural conditions are not suitable for the cultivation of corn, which requires much sunshine, but is favorable for oats and potatoes. Therefore these people live on potatoes instead of corn.

241 In the grasslands agriculture is prohibited by geographical limitations. People have to trade for barley flour mixed with bean powder. It is called
264 Cham-Pa 糌粑. At meal time they just mix it with tea or milk, and that is their staple food. They eat with their hands; they do not bother with chopstick

264 The manner of eating is greatly affected by the distance from the Chinese,
352 The Ch'iang and Gia-rung tribes, who are nearer to the Chinese, use chopsticks, and their kitchens are built upon a double pattern; that is, they have the Chinese kitchen arrangement, and at the same time also have fire places in the centers of ther kitchens. The Gia-rung who live in the upper valley of the Cha-ku River, and the Black River people, and the Fan people, have only the fireplace and very little furniture in the home; no tables, no chairs, and no beds, but they use furs and woolen mats as bedding.

272 Tea seems to be the life blood of all. Tea drinking to the people of Li-fan county is far more important even than tea drinking is to the English.

D. SOCIAL CUSTOMS IN RELATION TO GROUP LIVING.

1. GRAZING COOPERATIVES

241 Among the Ch'iang and Gia-rung in the drainage area of the Min in the southeast, the people are mainly agricultural. They cultivate the slopes between the high mountains and the deep valleys. The cultivable area is naturally limited, and every inch is valuable.

[1] [the Fan woman, -- Analyst]

5:Graham E-5 (1933, 1941)1942 AE3 Sino-Tibetan
Border Peoples AE3
Ch'iang

III. Economic Life.

1. Communications, Roads, and Bridges.

Among the Ch'iang there are no telephones, radios, or telegraph lines. There are no newspapers, and no books excepting those written by the Chinese and possessed by the few who can read them. Chinese-built roads connect the cities and towns in the valleys. Even here no wheeled vehicles can be used—only "hwagers" and sedan chairs, riding horses, and pack animals. On the Chinese roads some carry loads on the ends of bien dan or poles, but many carry their loads on their backs. Between the Ch'iang homes and villages the roads are unpaved footpaths, very narrow and often very steep. Frequently they go over or along the sides of steep precipices. It is not strange that the Ch'iang generally walk and always carry their loads on their backs. News is passed along by word of mouth, and naturally it is sometimes inaccurate. [203]

The bridges resemble those of the Chinese and of their various neighbors in this region. A small creek may be waded, or crossed by stepping on large stones. Some bridges are merely logs or boards laid across the streams. One type of bridge is the false or corbelled arch. From both sides large timbers reach out one beyond the other, until they meet above the middle of the stream. A bridge often consists of a single bamboo cable. Two hollow wooden half-cylinders are tied securely around the cable. The person or baggage is tied to this, and when released slides half way across. Then the person pulls himself hand over hand the rest of the way, or the baggage is pulled to the opposite shore by means of a small rope. The larger rope bridges have nine or ten bamboo cables underfoot on which boards are laid, and four or more cables on each side. The longest bridges have several wooden trestles, the bridge sagging down between. As one walks over, the whole bridge shakes.

The rivers are too rapid for boats, which between Mou Chow and Yin Shiu Wan 秧秀湾 and between Wei Chow and Tsagulow are not even used as ferries.

2. Money, Marketing, Bartering, and Borrowing.

Chinese money is the currency of the Ch'iang. Until the latter part of the Manchu dynasty it was silver ingots or lump silver, then it was silver dollars. Now it is Chinese bank bills.

There is some buying and selling in the small villages. This is

mewv

craft. The women know how to spin wool, but cannot weave. The only craft with which a woman can earn money is that of hairdresser. Only the men can sew, and they make all the clothing and shoes. They use Chinese cotton thread and crude needles imported from Szechuan. The only men's craft besides tailoring is saddle-making. Often, however, men earn money with their oxen as drivers of pack animals. The tents are made mostly by lamas.

Basketry is not highly developed. The large willow baskets used for gathering yak dung are sometimes made at home, but are generally imported from the neighboring sedentary Fantzu. Shallow baskets are used for storing special provisions, for example, mushrooms, and these are obtained from the Tebu-Fantzu.

The livestock of the nomads constitutes their entire wealth. They have practically no money. In livestock there are great differences between rich and poor. It often happens that a family or an entire tent community suddenly becomes impoverished, if a great many animals starve after a deep snowfall, or if many die of an epidemic. If a family loses all its animals, friends and neighbors help them out. There is very little begging. In the nomad settlements one never sees beggars; a few may be seen around the monasteries where they get a little tsamba on festive occasions or at burials.

Taxation is still very low: $0.50 to $1, according to the size of the family, must be paid annually to the tribal chief. The Chinese police collect it from him twice a year, in the second and eighth month. No monetary tax need be paid to the lamaseries, /36/ but each family must contribute food for the general temple festivals and to those temples where they have relatives among the lamas. Lamas also come to the tent camps very often to collect butter for the lamaseries, and this is always freely given.

Trade is entirely in the hands of Mohammedans and Chinese chiefly the former. There are quite a number of things that are purchased with money; farther in the interior of the grasslands there is more barter. During the first years of the Republic silver dollars came to be used in place of unminted silver (taels). Smaller units of exchange are the tsuan (?) and copper coins. A tsuan is the equivalent of 49 copper coins; 4 tsuan are 36 cents; 11 1/2 tsuan are 1 silver dollar. In 1936 there was no paper money among the Fantzu, but it will soon replace silver which is being recalled by Chinese officials.

The nomads sell the following to Mohammedans and Chinese: sheep, horses and yaks, sheep guts, horse and yak hides, horse ar